

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05

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R 021615Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8813

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE OUAGADOUGOU 2483

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, ML, UV

SUBJECT: MALI/UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE

REF: A) OUAGA 2476; B) BAMAKO 4134 (NOTAL)

1. PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF RADIO MALI BROADCAST REPORTED REF (B), GOUV DECIDED TO BRIEF FOREIGN AMBASSADORS ON ITS BORDER DISPUTE WITH MALI. FOREIGN MINISTER ZERBO RECEIVED ALL RESIDENT AMBASSADORS SEPARATELY MORNING NOVEMBER 30. FROM SUBSEQUENT REMARKS MADE BY SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES, I GATHER THAT ALL WERE GIVEN THE SAME STORY.

2. ZERBO BEGAN BRIEFING BY CONFIRMING THAT PRESIDENT LAMIZANA AND COLONEL TRAORE WOULD MEET DECEMBER 4 AT FARAMANA, A BORDER TOWN NORTH OF BOBO-DOULASSO. HE THEN REVIEWED RECENT EVENTS ALONG LINES ALREADY REPORTED IN REF (A) AND PREVIOUS. HE SAID THAT MALIAN LIEUTENANT AND FIVE MEN RECENTLY TAKEN PRISONERS HAD BEEN RELEASED AT MALIAN BORDER.

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3. RES OF BRIEFING WAS DEVOTED TO REVIEW OF EVENTS

THROUGH WHICH UPPER VOLTA'S BORDERS WERE ESTABLISHED. PRIOR TO 1932, WHEN COLONY OF UPPER VOLTA WAS ABOLISHED AND ITS TERRITORY PARTITIONED BETWEEN FRENCH SUDAN, NIGER, AND IVORY COAST, UPPER VOLTA'S BORDERS WERE THOSE NOW CLAIMED BY GOUV. LAW PASSED BY FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN 1947 REESTABLISHING UPPER VOLTA AS AN OVERSEAS TERRITORY OF FRENCH UNION SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT NEW TERRITORY'S BORDERS WERE THOSE WHICH HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED PRIOR TO 1932. MALIANS NOW CLAIMED THAT LARGE AREA NORTH OF DJIBO HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO FRENCH SUDAN IN 1935 BY DECREE OF FRENCH GOVERNOR IN DAKAR. ZERBO COMMENTED THAT SINCE DISPUTED AREA WAS AT THAT TIME ADMINISTERED AS PART OF FRENCH SUDAN, THERE SEEMED LITTLE POINT FOR FRENCH GOVERNOR TO ISSUE SUCH DECREE. AT ANY RATE, 1947 LAW CLEARLY INCLUDED DISPUTED TERRITORY WITHIN UPPER VOLTA BORDERS. MALIANS ALSO CLAIM THAT DISPUTED AREA IS INHABITED ONLY BY MALIANS WHICH, ZERBO CONCEDED MAY BE THE CASE AT PRESENT. MALIAN NOMADS HAVE MOVED IN TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FREE DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD AND NOW REFUSE TO RETURN TO MALI WHERE AUTHORITIES ARE ALLEGEDLY NOT AS DILIGENT IN PROVIDING FOOD.

4. WITH REGARD TO AREA NORTH OF BELI RIVER, MALIANS CLAIM THAT SMALL HILL USED ON COLONIAL MAPS AS POINT WHERE FRENCH SUDAN, UPPER VOLTA AND NIGER BORDERS CONVERGE, IS ACTUALLY FURTHER SOUTH THAN INDICATED ON MAPS. GOUV LAND SURVEYORS, HOWEVER, HAVE SHOWN THAT MALIAN CLAIM IS UNFOUNDED.

GRAHAM

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